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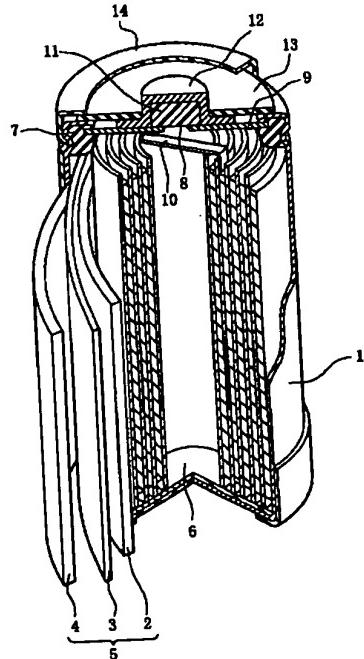
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(54)【発明の名称】 ニッケル・水素二次電池

(57)【要約】

【課題】 高温保存下における自己放電特性に優れたニッケル・水素二次電池を提供する。

【解決手段】 正極2と負極4との間に合成樹脂繊維からなるセパレータ3が介装されている電極群5をアルカリ電解液と共に電池缶1に封入した構造のニッケル・水素二次電池において、前記電池充放電後の状態における前記セパレータ3の平均孔径が $50 \mu\text{m}$ 以下であるニッケル・水素二次電池。



## 【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 正極と負極の間に合成樹脂繊維からなるセパレータが介装されている電極群をアルカリ電解液と共に電池缶に封入した構造のニッケル・水素二次電池において、前記電池充放電後の状態における前記セパレータの平均孔径が $50\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 以下であることを特徴とするニッケル・水素二次電池。

【請求項2】 窒素を用いたBET1点法で測定した前記セパレータの比表面積が、 $0.5\sim5.0\text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ である請求項1記載のニッケル・水素二次電池。

【請求項3】 前記セパレータが、親水基を有するビニルモノマーでグラフト共重合されたポリオレフィン系合成樹脂繊維の不織布であり、かつ、滴定法により求められるイオン交換量で表される前記グラフト共重合の割合が、 $0.2\sim2.0\text{ meq/g}$ である請求項1または2記載のニッケル・水素二次電池。

## 【発明の詳細な説明】

## 【0001】

【発明の属する技術分野】本発明はニッケル・水素二次電池に関し、さらに詳しくは、高温保管時の自己放電特性に優れたニッケル・水素二次電池に関する。

## 【0002】

【従来の技術】近年、携帯電話や携帯型のノートパソコンのような各種電子機器のコードレス化、高機能化、小型化、軽量化の進展に伴い、その電源である二次電池に対しては高容量化の要望が高まっている。従来、これらの電子機器の電源としてはニッケル・カドミウム二次電池が主として使用されてきた。しかし、上記のような高容量化への要望の高まりに伴い、ニッケル・カドミウム二次電池よりもさらに高容量であるということから、最近では、ニッケル・水素二次電池が広く使用され始めている。

【0003】しかしながら、ニッケル・水素二次電池は、ニッケル・カドミウム二次電池よりも高容量であることはいえ、充電状態で高温環境下に保管しておくと自己放電を起こしやすいという問題がある。したがって、ニッケル・水素二次電池の使用環境が多様化して過酷な条件下で使用されることに対応して、このニッケル・水素二次電池には、高容量であることはもちろんのこと、自己放電特性の向上や充放電サイクル寿命特性の向上が強く求められている。

【0004】ところで、ニッケル・水素二次電池は、一般に水酸化ニッケルのようなニッケル化合物の粉末を担持する正極と、水素吸蔵合金の粉末を担持する負極との間に電気絶縁性でかつ保液性を備えたセパレータを介して電極群を形成し、この電極群を負極端子を兼ねる電池缶の中に所定のアルカリ電解液と共に収容した後、この電池缶を封口した構造になっている。

【0005】このセパレータとしては、アルカリ電解液との濡れ性を確保するために、親水性が良好なポリアミ

ド繊維からなる不織布が従来より広く用いられている。しかしながら、このポリアミド繊維はアルカリ電解液中の加水分解によって例えば硝酸イオン、亜硝酸イオン、アンモニアのような不純物を生成し、この不純物が正極に生成した $\beta$ -オキシ水酸化ニッケルを還元することにより、正極の自己放電反応を助長して電池の自己放電特性を劣化させるという欠点を有する。

【0006】このようなことから、セパレータの材料としては、前述したポリアミド繊維よりも耐酸化性に優れている繊維材料、例えばポリプロピレン繊維のようなポリオレフィン繊維やPTFE繊維のようなフッ素樹脂系の繊維を選定し、これらに親水化処理を施したものを使用する試みがなされている。親水化処理の具体例としては、例えばポリオレフィン繊維の不織布を陰イオン系、陽イオン系、非イオン系の界面活性剤で表面処理することなどがあげられる。

【0007】しかしながら、このようなセパレータは、電池に対する充放電時に表面の界面活性剤が離脱して親水性が低下し、その結果、充放電サイクル寿命特性の低下を招来するという問題がある。一方、ポリオレフィン繊維の不織布に、プラズマ処理、コロナ放電処理、スルホン化処理、アクリル酸グラフト処理などの処理を行うことにより親水基を外部から不織布に付加して、その不織布全体の表面の親水性を高め、自己放電特性の向上を図る試みがなされているが、これらの処理を行うだけでは、自己放電特性の向上は未だ十分であるとは言いがたい。

## 【0008】

【発明が解決しようとする課題】本発明は、従来のニッケル・水素二次電池における上記の問題を解決することにより、自己放電特性に優れたニッケル・水素二次電池の提供を目的とする。

## 【0009】

【課題を解決するための手段】本発明者らは、上記の目的を達成するために検討を重ねる中で、充放電後のセパレータの平均孔径に着目し、この平均孔径の値が所定の範囲にあるときに電池の自己放電特性が飛躍的に向上するとの知見を得て、本発明を完成するに至った。

【0010】すなわち、本発明のニッケル・水素二次電池は、正極と負極の間に合成樹脂繊維からなるセパレータが介装されている電極群をアルカリ電解液と共に電池缶に封入した構造のニッケル・水素二次電池において、前記電池充放電後の状態における前記セパレータの平均孔径が $50\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 以下であることを特徴とする。そして、前記セパレータの、窒素を用いたBET1点法で測定した比表面積が、 $0.5\sim5.0\text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ であり、さらに、前記セパレータが、親水基を有するビニルモノマーでグラフト共重合されたポリオレフィン系合成樹脂繊維の不織布であり、かつ、滴定法により求められるイオンの交換量で表される前記グラフト共重合の割合が、 $0.2$

50 交換量で表される前記グラフト共重合の割合が、 $0.2$



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でセパレータは引っ張られることにより、その孔径は、巻回前よりも大きくなるものと考えられる。したがって、巻回前における平均孔径が大きいセパレータは、巻回時や電池内への組み込み時に、正極と負極間のショートを引き起こしやすくなり、また巻回後とそれに続く充放電の過程で、大径化したセパレータの隙間を通って負極からの水素が正極に到達しやすい状態になる。

【0022】しかしながら、電池充放電後の平均孔径が50μm以下のセパレータ、したがって、巻前面にはより平均孔径が小さいセパレータの場合は、適切なガス透過性と良好な機械的強度を有するため、当該セパレータを挟んで正負極を巻回して電極群を作製する際、正負極間のショートを防ぐと同時に、充電状態で貯蔵された場合でも、セパレータ中の電解液の分布状態が均一化され、結果として、負極から放出された水素ガスが正極に到達しにくくなるために、自己放電の発生が抑制されるものと考えられる。

【0023】以上のようなことから、電池に組み込まれる前の段階で、セパレータの平均孔径が $50\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ であっても、電池作製時の巻回のストレスによって平均孔径が増加し $50\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ を超える可能性があるため、あくまでも充放電後のセパレータの平均孔径を上記範囲に規定することが必要である。セパレータの充放電後の平均孔径が $50\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ を超えると、このセパレータを挟んで正負極を巻回して電極群を作製する際、正負極間のショートを招くと共に、負極から放出された水素ガスが正極に到達しやすくなり、自己放電特性が低下する。なお、平均孔径が $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 程度で効果は概ね飽和に達し、さらに平均孔径が $5\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ を下回ると電池反応に必要なイオン透過性ならびにガス透過性が低下する可能性があるため、好適な平均孔径は、 $5\sim40\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ の範囲である。

【0024】充放電後に平均孔径が $50\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 以下となる  
ようなセパレータの平均孔径の制御は、例えば、セパレ  
ータ作製時の結晶性を高めるための熱処理温度、硬さや  
接着性を高める材質の選定、あるいは、繊維間ののり付  
け効果を高めるための処理（例えば、アクリル酸グラフ  
ト処理）などの諸条件を適宜選択することによりするこ  
とが可能となる。

【0025】そして、セパレータの構成材料である台成樹脂繊維の具体例としては、ポリエチレン繊維、ポリプロピレン繊維などのポリオレフィン繊維単体；ポリオレフィン繊維の表面がそれとは異種のポリオレフィン繊維で被覆されている芯鞘構造の複合繊維；互いに異種類のポリオレフィン繊維の分割構造になっている複合繊維などをあげることができる。また、P T F E 繊維も使用することができるが、その場合には、例えばガラス繊維のような無機繊維を混在させることにより全体の機械的強度を高めることもできる。

【0026】さらに、セパレータは、窒素を用いた BET 法で測定したときの比表面積が 0.5~5.0 m<sup>2</sup>/g の範囲である。

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$m^2/g$  であることが好ましい。比表面積が  $0.5\ m^2/g$  より小さいセパレータを用いると、保液性が低下する可能性があり、逆に、比表面積が  $5.0\ m^2/g$  より大きいセパレータを用いると、その引張強度が低くなるので、保形性は低下し、電極群を製造する際の巻回時に、セパレータの破損などが生じやすくなる。セパレータとしてよく好ましいのは、比表面積が  $1.0 \sim 4.0\ m^2/g$  の範囲にあるものである。

【0027】セパレータの形態としては、上記の纖維の不織布であることが好ましいが、アルカリ電解液の通液が可能である微孔性のプラスチックシートであってよい。なお、不織布である場合には、上記の纖維を例えば乾式法、湿式法、スパンボンド法、メルトブロー法などによって製造することができる。これらの方法のうち、スパンボンド法、メルトブロー法および分割法は上述した比表面積を増大できるため有利である。なお、不織布を作製する際には、材質により決定される温度と圧力を加熱プレス処理を行うことが好ましい。

20 加熱ノレス処理を行うことが好ましい。

【0028】また、セパレータの形態が不織布である場合、その目付量は  $30 \sim 70 \text{ g/m}^2$  であることが好ましい。目付量が  $30 \text{ g/m}^2$  より小さい不織布は、セパレータとしての強度が低いため前述の電極群を製造する際の巻回時に破損する可能性もあり、逆に、 $70 \text{ g/m}^2$  より大きい場合には、電極群を製造したときの当該セパレータの占有体積が過大となって電極容量の低下を招くことになる。

【0029】そして、セパレータがポリオレフィン系樹脂織維の不織布である場合、その不織布は、親水化処理を施されていることが好ましく、そのような親水化処理としては、例えばフッ素化処理、プラズマ処理、コロナ放電処理、スルホン化処理、カルボキシル基などの親水基を有するビニルポリマーのグラフト共重合処理をあげることができる。

【0030】これらの親水化処理の中でも、とくに親水基を有するビニルポリマーのグラフト共重合処理は好ましいものである。ここで、親水基を有するビニルモノマーとしては、例えば、アクリル酸、メタクリル酸、アクリル酸やメタクリル酸のエステル類、ビニルピリジン、ビニルピロリドン、スチレンスルホン酸、スチレンなどの直接酸または塩基と反応して塩を形成し得る官能基を有するもの、もしくはグラフト重合された後に加水分解して塩を形成し得る官能基を有するものをあげることができる。とくに、アクリル酸はビニルモノマーとして好適である。

【0031】上述したグラフト共重合は、不織布を親水性のビニルモノマーの溶液に浸漬して表面にビニルモノマーを塗布した後、紫外線、電子線、X線のような電離放射線に代表されるエネルギーービームを照射することにより実施される。そして、このときのビニルモノマーのグラフト共重合割合は、以下に述べるような滴定法によ

り求められるイオン交換量で、0.2~2.0 m e q/g (milli-equivalent per gram) であることが好ましい。

【0032】以下に、この滴定法について説明する。まず、試料（例えばポリオレフィン繊維からなる不織布をアクリル酸によりグラフト共重合したもの）0.5~1gを100m lのポリエチレン製広口ビンに取り、1N-HCl溶液100m lを加え、試料が浮き上がっている場合には完全に沈めた後、60℃の恒温槽に1時間保存する。

【0033】つづいて、上記の試料をイオン交換水200m lが入ったビーカに移し、ガラス棒で攪拌し、イオン交換水を取り替えながら洗浄液のpHが6~7になるまで洗浄する。試料の水切りを行い、ステンレス製バット上に広げ、100℃の乾燥器で1時間乾燥する。冷却後、得られた試料の重さを0.1mgの精度で量り、1\*

$$I.E.C = \frac{T_2 \times S_1/S_2 - T_1}{W_1} \times \frac{E_1}{S_1} \times 0.1 \times F$$

【0035】ここで、

I.E.C. : カリウムイオン交換量 (m e q/g)  
 T<sub>1</sub> : 試料溶液の滴定に要した0.1N-HCl溶液の量 (m l)  
 T<sub>2</sub> : ブランク溶液の滴定に要した0.1N-HCl溶液の量 (m l)  
 S<sub>1</sub> : 採取した試料溶液の重量 (g)  
 S<sub>2</sub> : 採取したブランク溶液の重量 (g)  
 W<sub>1</sub> : 乾燥後の試料の重量 (g)  
 E<sub>1</sub> : 添加した0.01N-KOH溶液の重量 (g)  
 F : 0.1N-HCl溶液のファクタ

このようにして算出された前記ビニルモノマーのイオン交換量が0.2 m e q/g 未満である場合には、不織布に対するグラフト共重合割合が小さくセパレータの保液性が低下する可能性がある。一方、イオン交換量が2.0 m e q/g を超える場合には、二次電池を大電流放電した際の作動電圧が低下する可能性がある。

【0036】

【実施例】〈実施例1〉

(1) ニッケル極(正極)の作製

水酸化ニッケル粉末100重量部に対し、酸化コバルト粉末6.1重量部、ポリアクリル酸ナトリウム0.16重量部、ヒドロキシメチルセルロース0.06重量部、カルボキシメチルセルロース0.11重量部、PTFEディスページョン(比重1.5, 固形分含量60重量%)0.67重量部を混合し、さらに純水30重量部を添加し、全体を混練してペーストを調製した。このペーストをニッケルの発泡基板に充填し、乾燥した後ロール圧延を行って厚み0.6mmのニッケル極(正極)を作製した。

【0037】(2) 水素吸蔵合金電極(負極)の作製

\* 0.0m lのポリエチレン製広口ビンに移し、それに0.01N-KOH溶液110g±0.01gを加える。一方、ブランク試料として同様に100m lのポリエチレン製広口ビンに0.01N-KOH溶液を110g±0.01g採取する。引き続き、これらの広口ビンを60℃の恒温槽に入れ、30分毎に軽く振り混ぜ、2時間保存する。これらの各広口ビンを軽く振り混ぜた後、試料をそれぞれ取り出し、室温になるまで放冷する。放冷後の試験溶液約100gを200m lのコニカルビーカに0.01gの精度で量り取り、フェノールフタレンを指示薬とし、0.1N-HCl溶液で中和滴定する。また、ブランク試験溶液も同様に操作して滴定する。このような滴定によりカリウムイオン交換量を下記数1に示す式により算出する。

【0034】

【数1】

20 組成がLmNi<sub>4.0</sub>Co<sub>0.04</sub>Mn<sub>0.3</sub>Al<sub>0.3</sub> (LmはLa富化のミッシュメタル)の水素吸蔵合金を機械粉碎して200メッシュ(タイラー篩)下の粉末を得た。ついで、この粉末100重量部に対し、ポリアクリル酸ナトリウム0.3重量部、カルボキシメチルセルロース0.05重量部、カーボンブラック1.0重量部、PTFEディスページョン(比重1.5, 固形分含量60重量%)1.0重量部を配合し、全体を44重量部の水で混練してペーストを調製した。

【0038】このペーストをニッケルパンチドメタル(開口率45%)に塗布後乾燥し、さらにロール圧延して厚み0.3mmの水素吸蔵合金電極(負極)を作製した。

(3) セパレータの作製

スパンボンド法により、繊維径10μm、目付量が50g/m<sup>2</sup>のポリプロピレン樹脂繊維から基布を作製した。しかるのち、この基布に対して加熱プレス処理を行い、厚さ0.15mmの不織布を作製した。つづいて、この不織布をアクリル酸水溶液に浸漬した後取り出し、それに紫外線を照射してアクリル酸モノマーをグラフト共重合させた。このときのグラフト共重合割合は、前述したイオン交換量で0.8 m e q/g であった。この不織布を洗浄して未反応のアクリル酸を除去した後、乾燥し、バブルポイント法での測定時に平均孔径20μmのセパレータを得た。このセパレータのBET1点法で測定した比表面積は、2.0 m<sup>2</sup>/g であった。このセパレータ作製時の諸条件を表1にまとめて示した。

【0039】(4) 電池の組み立て

上記により得られたセパレータを前述の正極と負極との間に介装し、全体を渦巻状に巻回して電極群を作製した。このような電極群と7NのKOHおよび1NのLi

OHからなる電解液と有底円筒状容器に収容して図1に示したような構造を有するAAAサイズの円筒形ニッケル・水素二次電池を組み立てた。

#### (5) 電池特性の評価

このようにして得られた電池に対して、20℃において公称容量に対して0.2Cで150%の充電を行った後、1Cで電池電圧が1.0Vになるまで放電する充放電サイクルを3回反復した。しかるのち、0.2Cで150%の充電を行い、その状態で60℃の恒温槽に3日間保管し、保管後に1Cで電池電圧が1.0Vになるまで放電を行い、そのときの残存容量を測定した。

【0040】電池の公称容量をC<sub>0</sub>、上記の残存容量をC<sub>t</sub>としたとき、次式：100 × C<sub>t</sub> / C<sub>0</sub> (%)により容量残存率(%)を算出し、その経時変化を図2に示した。ついで、この電池を分解してセパレータを取り出し、水洗乾燥後上記と同様にバブルポイント法にて平均孔径を測定したところ、変化は見られず20μmであった。

【0041】〈実施例2〉セパレータとして下記に述べるものを使用した以外は、上記実施例1と同様にして円筒形ニッケル・水素二次電池を組み立てた。スパンボンド法により、繊維径10μm、目付量が50g/m<sup>2</sup>のポリプロピレン樹脂繊維から基布を作製した。しかるのち、この基布に対して加熱プレス処理を行い、厚さ0.200mmの不織布を作製した。つづいて、この不織布をアクリル酸水溶液に浸漬した後、紫外線を照射してアクリル酸モノマーをグラフト共重合させた。グラフト共重合割合および比表面積は表1に示した通りであった。この不織布を洗浄して未反応のアクリル酸を除去した後、乾燥し、バブルポイント法で測定したところ、平均孔径23μmのセパレータを得た。

【0042】このセパレータを電池に組み込み、実施例1と同様の条件で充放電を行った後、電池から取り出して平均孔径を測定したところ、38μmであった。得られた電池に対して、上記と同様に特性評価を行い、容量残存率を算出してその経時変化を図2に示した。

〈実施例3〉セパレータとして下記に述べるものを使用した以外は、上記実施例1と同様にして円筒形ニッケル・水素二次電池を組み立てた。

【0043】ポリプロピレン樹脂繊維とポリエチレン樹脂繊維が互いに隣接して配列された繊維径20μm、目付量

\*付量が58g/m<sup>2</sup>の基布を湿式法により作製した。しかるのち、この基布に対して加熱プレス処理を行い、厚さ0.16mmの不織布を作製した。つづいて、この不織布をアクリル酸水溶液に浸漬した後、紫外線を照射してアクリル酸モノマーをグラフト共重合させた。グラフト共重合割合および比表面積は表1に示した通りであった。この不織布を洗浄して未反応のアクリル酸を除去した後、乾燥し、バブルポイント法で測定したところ、平均孔径25μmのセパレータを得た。

【0044】このセパレータを電池に組み込み、実施例1と同様の条件で充放電を行った後、電池から取り出して平均孔径を測定したところ、30μmであった。得られた電池に対して、上記と同様に特性評価を行い、容量残存率を算出し、その経時変化を図2に示した。

〈実施例4、5〉ポリプロピレン樹脂繊維の基布から作製した不織布にグラフト共重合処理をした際のグラフト共重合割合を、表1に示したように変化させたこと以外は、上記実施例1と同様にしてセパレータを作製し、同様の条件で特性評価を行い、容量残存率を算出して、その経時変化を図2に示した。

【0045】〈比較例1〉セパレータとして下記に述べるものを使用した以外は、上記実施例1と同様にして円筒形ニッケル・水素二次電池を組み立てた。ポリプロピレン樹脂繊維とポリエチレン樹脂繊維が互いに隣接して配列された繊維径20μm、目付量が58g/m<sup>2</sup>の基布を湿式法により作製した。しかるのち、この基布に対して加熱プレス処理を行わずに、厚さ調整を行い、厚さ0.20mmの不織布を作製した。つづいて、この不織布をアクリル酸水溶液に浸漬した後、紫外線を照射してアクリル酸モノマーをグラフト共重合させた。グラフト共重合割合および比表面積は表1に示した通りであった。この不織布を洗浄して未反応のアクリル酸を除去した後、乾燥し、バブルポイント法で測定したところ、平均孔径30μmのセパレータを得た。

【0046】このセパレータを電池に組み込み、実施例1と同様の条件で充放電を行った後、電池から取り出して平均孔径を測定したところ、52μmであった。得られた電池に対して、上記と同様に特性評価を行い、容量残存率を算出してその経時変化を図2に示した。

【0047】

【表1】

	実施例1	実施例2	実施例3	実施例4	実施例5	比較例1
繊維材料	ポリプロピレン	ポリプロピレン	ポリプロピレン/ ポリエチレン	ポリプロピレン	ポリプロピレン	ポリプロピレン/ ポリエチレン
繊維径(μm)	10	10	20	10	10	20
目付量(g/m <sup>2</sup> )	50	50	58	50	50	58
イオン交換量(meq/g) (グラフト共重合割合)	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.2	0.6	0.8
比表面積(m <sup>2</sup> /g)	2.0	2.0	1.2	2.0	2.0	1.2
平均孔径(μm) 充放電前	20	23	25	20	20	30
充放電後	20	38	30	20	20	52

【0048】表1に示した結果からも明らかなように、充放電終了後の平均孔径が $50\mu\text{m}$ 以下であるセパレータを組み込んだ電池（実施例1～3）は、平均孔径が $50\mu\text{m}$ を超えるセパレータを組み込んだ電池（比較例1）に比べて容量残存率が高く、高温保管時における自己放電特性が向上していることが確認された。

## 【0049】

【発明の効果】以上の説明で明らかのように、本発明のニッケル・水素二次電池は、とくに高温保管時の自己放電特性が良好であるため、高温下で長期保存しても高い容量残存率を示す。

## 【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】本発明のニッケル・水素二次電池の構造を示す一部切欠斜視図である。

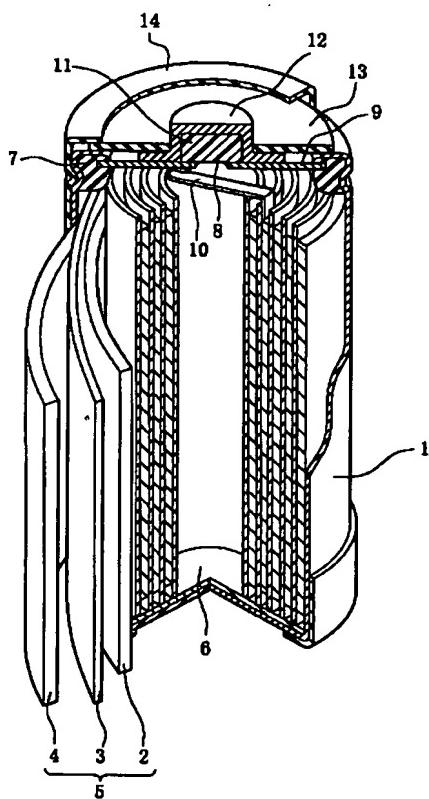
【図2】実施例で製造したニッケル・水素二次電池の高溫下における長期保存時の容量残存率の経時変化を示す\*

\* グラフである。

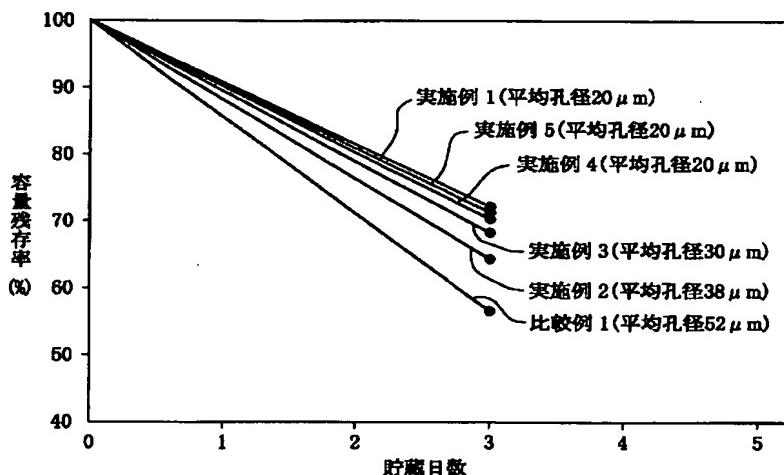
## 【符号の説明】

- |    |              |
|----|--------------|
| 1  | 電池缶          |
| 2  | ニッケル極（正極）    |
| 3  | セパレータ        |
| 4  | 水素吸蔵合金電極（負極） |
| 5  | 電極群          |
| 6  | 絶縁板          |
| 7  | 絶縁ガスケット      |
| 8  | 孔            |
| 9  | 第1封口板        |
| 10 | リード端子        |
| 11 | 安全弁          |
| 12 | 正極端子         |
| 13 | 押さえ板         |
| 14 | 外装チューブ       |

【図1】



【図2】



フロントページの続き

F ターム(参考) 5H021 BB20 CC02 EE04 EE16 HH03  
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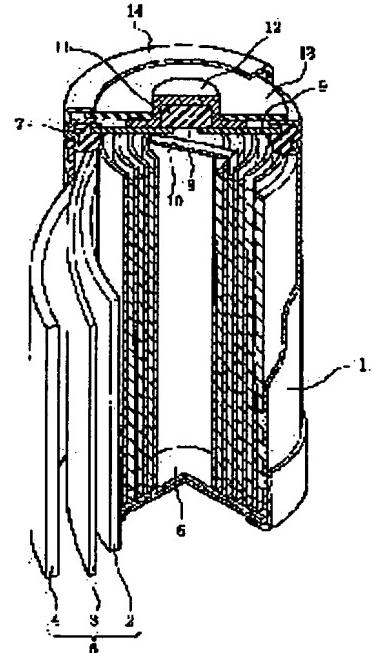
(51)Int.Cl. H01M 2/16  
 H01M 10/30

(21)Application number : 2000-086230 (71)Applicant : TOSHIBA BATTERY CO LTD  
 (22)Date of filing : 27.03.2000 (72)Inventor : TSUKIASHI MASAHIKO  
 TAJIMA MICHIKO

## (54) NICKEL - HYDROGEN SECONDARY BATTERY

### (57)Abstract:

**PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED:** To provide a nickel - hydrogen secondary battery which is superior in the self-discharge characteristic under a preservation at high temperatures.  
**SOLUTION:** After a charged or a discharged state of a battery obtained by sealing an electrode group 5 with interposed separator 3 formed of synthetic resin fibers between a positive electrode 2 and a negative electrode 4, together with alkaline electrolyte in a battery can 1, holes in the separator 3 have an average diameter not exceeding 50 µm, and the specific surface area of the separator 3 measured by the BET one point method using nitrogen is 0.5 to 5.0 meq/g.



### LEGAL STATUS

[Date of request for examination]

[Date of sending the examiner's decision of rejection]

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[Date of final disposal for application]

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[Date of registration]

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**CLAIMS**

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**[Claim(s)]**

[Claim 1] The nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery characterized by the average aperture of said separator in the condition after said cell charge and discharge being 50 micrometers or less in the nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery of the structure which enclosed with the cell can the electrode group by which the separator which consists of plastic fiber is infix between the positive electrode and the negative electrode with the alkali electrolytic solution.

[Claim 2] The nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery according to claim 1 whose specific surface area of said separator measured by law one BET using nitrogen is 0.5-5.0m<sup>2</sup>/g.

[Claim 3] The nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery of said graft copolymerization expressed with the amount of ion exchanges which said separator is the nonwoven fabric of the polyolefine system plastic fiber by which graft copolymerization was carried out by the vinyl monomer which has a hydrophilic group, and is calculated by the titrimetric method according to claim 1 or 2 it is [ rechargeable battery ] 0.2 - 2.0 meq/g comparatively.

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[Translation done.]

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**DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

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**[Detailed Description of the Invention]****[0001]**

[Field of the Invention] This invention relates to nickel and a hydrogen rechargeable battery excellent in the self-discharge property at the time of elevated-temperature storage in more detail about nickel and a hydrogen rechargeable battery.

**[0002]**

[Description of the Prior Art] In recent years, to the rechargeable battery which is the power source, the requests of high-capacity-izing are mounting with progress of cordless-izing of various electronic equipment like the notebook computer or a cellular phone or a pocket mold, advanced features, a miniaturization, and lightweight-izing. Conventionally, as a power source of these electronic equipment, the nickel cadmium rechargeable battery has mainly been used. However, since it says that it is high capacity further rather than a nickel cadmium rechargeable battery in connection with a rise of the request to the above high-capacity-izing, recently, nickel and a hydrogen rechargeable battery are beginning to be used widely.

[0003] However, rather than a nickel cadmium rechargeable battery, although nickel and a hydrogen rechargeable battery are high capacity, when it is kept under hot environments in the state of charge, it has a problem of a lifting or a cone for self-discharge. Therefore, corresponding to the operating environment of nickel and a hydrogen rechargeable battery being diversified, and being used under a severe condition, this nickel and hydrogen rechargeable battery are called on for improvement in a self-discharge property, or improvement in a charge-and-discharge cycle-life property not to mention being high capacity.

[0004] By the way, nickel and a hydrogen rechargeable battery infix the separator which is electric insulation and was equipped with solution retention between the positive electrode which generally supports the powder of a nickel compound like nickel hydroxide, and the negative electrode which supports the powder of a hydrogen storing metal alloy, forms an electrode group, and after it holds this electrode group with the predetermined alkali electrolytic solution into the cell can which serves as a negative-electrode terminal, it has structure which obturated this cell can.

[0005] As this separator, in order to secure wettability with the alkali electrolytic solution, the nonwoven fabric with which a hydrophilic property consists of a good polyamide fiber is used more widely than before. However, this polyamide fiber has the fault of promoting the self-discharge reaction of a positive electrode and degrading the self-discharge property of a cell, by returning the beta-oxy-nickel hydroxide which generated nitrate ion, nitrite ion, and an impurity like ammonia, and this impurity generated to the positive electrode by hydrolysis in the alkali electrolytic solution.

[0006] Since it is such, as an ingredient of a separator, the fiber of a fluororesin system like [ polyamide fiber / which was mentioned above ] polyolefine fiber like textile materials excellent in oxidation resistance, for example, a polypropylene fiber, or PTFE fiber is selected, and the attempt which uses what performed hydrophilization processing to these is made. As an example of hydrophilization processing, carrying out surface treatment of the nonwoven fabric of polyolefine fiber, for example with the surfactant of an anion system, a cation system, and a non-ion system etc. is raised.

[0007] However, a surface surfactant breaks away at the time of the charge and discharge to a cell, and a hydrophilic property falls, consequently such a separator has the problem of inviting the fall of a charge-and-discharge cycle-life property. Although the attempt which adds a hydrophilic group to a nonwoven fabric from the exterior, raises the hydrophilic property of the front face of the whole nonwoven fabric to the nonwoven fabric of polyolefine fiber, and, on the other hand, aims at improvement in a self-discharge property to it by processing plasma treatment, corona discharge treatment, sulfonation processing, acrylic acid graft processing, etc. is made, it is hard to say that the improvement in a self-discharge property is still

enough only by performing these processings.

[0008]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] This invention aims at offer of the nickel and a hydrogen rechargeable battery excellent in the self-discharge property by solving the above-mentioned problem in the conventional nickel and hydrogen rechargeable battery.

[0009]

[Means for Solving the Problem] Paying attention to the average aperture of the separator after charge and discharge, in order to attain the above-mentioned purpose, while repeating examination, when the value of this average aperture is in the predetermined range, this invention persons acquire knowledge that the self-discharge property of a cell improves by leaps and bounds, and came to complete this invention.

[0010] That is, the nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery of this invention are characterized by the average aperture of said separator in the condition after said cell charge and discharge being 50 micrometers or less in the nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery of the structure which enclosed with the cell can the electrode group by which the separator which consists of plastic fiber is infixed between the positive electrode and the negative electrode with the alkali electrolytic solution. And it makes it suitable to be [ of said graft copolymerization expressed with the amount of ion exchanges which is the nonwoven fabric of the polyolefine system plastic fiber by which the specific surface area measured by law one BET using the nitrogen of said separator is 0.5-5.0m<sup>2</sup>/g, and graft copolymerization was carried out by the vinyl monomer in which said separator has a hydrophilic group further, and is calculated by the titrimetric method ] 0.2 - 2.0 meq/g comparatively.

[0011]

[Embodiment of the Invention] Physical and differing [ of the specification later mentioned as a separator ] from well-known nickel and hydrogen rechargeable battery from before, if it removes using what has chemical property do not have the nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery of this invention. First, the cylindrical shape nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery which shows the structure of the nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery of this invention to drawing 1 are made into an example, and is explained.

[0012] In drawing 1, the electrode group 5 which comes spirally to wind the sheet on top of which the nickel pole (positive electrode), the separator 3, and the hydrogen storing metal alloy electrode (negative electrode) 4 were laid is held with the alkali electrolytic solution (not shown) in the cell can 1 of a closed-end cylindrical shape. And the cell can 1 is electrically contacted by arranging a negative electrode 4 at the outermost part of the electrode group 5, and the pars basilaris ossis occipitalis of the electrode group 5 is located on the electric insulating plate 6 arranged at the pars basilaris ossis occipitalis of the cell can 1. As the alkali electrolytic solution used, the mixed liquor of a sodium hydroxide (NaOH) and a lithium hydroxide (LiOH), the mixed liquor of a potassium hydroxide (KOH) and LiOH, the mixed liquor of NaOH, KOH, and LiOH, etc. can be raised, for example.

[0013] Inside up opening of the cell can 1, the ring-like insulating gasket 7 has been arranged, the 1st obturation plate 9 of the disk configuration which has a hole 8 in the center after the periphery section has bit to this insulating gasket 7 has been arranged, and the 1st obturation plate 9 has obturated up opening of the cell can 1 airtightly through an insulating gasket 7 by performing fastening processing which reduces the diameter of up opening of said cell can 1 inside.

[0014] A lead terminal 10 is attached to the upper part of the electrode group 5, and this lead terminal 10 is welded to it with the inferior surface of tongue of the 1st obturation plate 9 mentioned above. And as the relief valve 11 made of rubber closes the central hole 8 of the 1st obturation plate 9, it is arranged, and further, as it is covered, the positive-electrode terminal 12 of a hat configuration is welded to the 1st obturation plate 9, and the electrode group 5 is enclosed.

[0015] Moreover, in the upper part of the cell can 1, the presser-foot plate 13 of the insulating material which has a central hole is arranged where only said positive-electrode terminal 12 is made to project from this central hole, and it presses down further, and the periphery section of a plate 13, and the lateral portion and bottom surface part of the cell can 1 are covered with the sheathing tube 14. In addition, the cell of this invention may be a square shape cell of the structure which is not limited to a cylindrical shape which was mentioned above, carried out the laminating of a nickel pole, a separator, and the negative electrode by turns, for example, considered as the electrode group of a rectangular parallelepiped configuration, and held and enclosed this with the cell can of a square shape.

[0016] The nickel pole (positive electrode) 2 is manufactured in general as follows. That is, the mixed powder which mixed the powder of electric conduction material like metal cobalt, cobalt oxide, and a cobalt

hydroxide to the powder of a nickel compound like nickel hydroxide first or the powder which coated the powder front face of a nickel compound with said electric conduction material, and a carboxymethyl cellulose, methyl cellulose, sodium polyacrylate, polytetrafluoroethylene and a binder like the hydroxypropyl methylcellulose are kneaded with water, and a viscous paste is prepared. In addition, to the nickel hydroxide to be used, an element like Co, Cu, Zn, aluminum, Mn, calcium, Mg, Fe, and Si may be dissolving.

[0017] Subsequently, after filling up and applying, said paste is dried to the charge collector of three-dimension network structure like the felt plating substrate which comes to give this paste to for example, a sponge-like nickel substrate, a reticulated sintering metal fiber substrate, or a nonwoven fabric nickel plating, pressing is further carried out to it continuously, and it is made the positive-electrode sheet of predetermined thickness. In addition, as a charge collector at this time, the 2.5-dimensional substrate of the structure of having weld flash can also be used for opening of punched metal.

[0018] After filling up with and applying hydrogen storing metal alloy powder, a binder, and the paste that comes to knead the specified quantity of electric conduction material like carbon black with water if needed, to a charge collector, a negative electrode 4 can be dried, can be fabricated, and can manufacture it to it. As a hydrogen storing metal alloy used at this time, it is not limited exceptionally, and electrochemically, about hydrogen, as long as it is occlusion and the thing which can be emitted, you may be why. Specifically, the thing; TiNi system, the TiFe system, the MgNi systems, or those mixed stock of the multi-element system which permuted some of LaNi<sub>5</sub>, MmNi<sub>5</sub> (Mm is a misch metal), LmNi<sub>5</sub> (Lm is a lanthanum enrichment misch metal), or nickel by aluminum, Mn, Co, Ti, Cu, Zn, Zr, Cr, B, etc. can be raised. Especially the hydrogen storing metal alloy shown by formula:LmNi<sub>x</sub>AlyAz (A is at least one sort chosen from aluminum and Co among a formula, and x, and y and z express the atomic ratio which satisfies  $4.8 \leq x+y+z \leq 5.4$ ) is suitable, when the pulverization at the time of a charge-and-discharge cycle is controlled and the cycle-life property of a cell is improved.

[0019] The polymeric materials same with being used at the time of manufacture of the above-mentioned nickel pole 2 as a binder used for manufacture of a negative electrode 4 can be raised, and the thing of three-dimension network structures, such as punched metal, an expanded metal, and a sponge-like metal substrate, can be raised as a charge collector, for example. Then, the separator which is the description of this invention is explained.

[0020] The average aperture in the condition after the cell charge and discharge at the time of this separator 3 consisting of plastic fiber, and building this separator into a cell needs to be 50 micrometers or less. In addition, JIS using the bubble point method to the separator concerned after disassembling the cell after performing the charge-and-discharge cycle under the conditions represented by the capacity test which discharges until it charges by 0.1C for 16 hours and cell voltage serves as an average aperture after charge and discharge here to 1.0V by 0.2C once [ at least ], taking out a separator and rinsing and drying the separator It is the thing of the value when measuring by the approach of K3832.

[0021] Generally, the aperture is considered to become larger than winding before by pulling a separator by the winding tension at the time of manufacture of an electrode group. Therefore, the separator with the large average aperture before winding is the process of the charge and discharge which become easy to cause the short-circuit between a positive electrode and a negative electrode at the time of winding and the inclusion into a cell, and follow it the winding back at it, and will be in the condition that the hydrogen from a negative electrode tends to reach a positive electrode, through the clearance between the major-diameter-sized separators.

[0022] However, when the average aperture after cell charge and discharge is a separator with a more small average aperture before a separator 50 micrometers or less, therefore winding Since it has suitable gas permeability and a good mechanical strength, when a forward negative electrode is wound on both sides of the separator concerned and an electrode group is produced, Even when it is stored in the state of charge at the same time it prevents the short-circuit between forward negative electrodes, the distribution condition of the electrolytic solution in a separator is equalized, and since the hydrogen gas emitted from the negative electrode stops being able to reach a positive electrode easily as a result, it is thought that generating of self-discharge is controlled.

[0023] Since it is above, and an average aperture increases and it may exceed 50 micrometers by the stress of winding at the time of cell production even if it is the phase before being included in a cell and the average aperture of a separator is 50 micrometers, it is required to specify the average aperture of the separator after charge and discharge in the above-mentioned range to the last. If the average aperture after the charge and discharge of a separator exceeds 50 micrometers, in case a forward negative electrode will be

wound on both sides of this separator and an electrode group will be produced, while causing the short-circuit between forward negative electrodes, the hydrogen gas emitted from the negative electrode becomes easy to reach a positive electrode, and a self-discharge property falls. In addition, since ionic permeability required for a cell reaction and gas permeability may fall if an average aperture reaches saturation in general in about 30 micrometers and, as for effectiveness, an average aperture is further less than 5 micrometers, the range of a suitable average aperture is 5-40 micrometers.

[0024] Control of the average aperture of a separator with which an average aperture is set to 50 micrometers or less after charge and discharge becomes possible [ carrying out by choosing suitably terms and conditions, such as processing (for example, acrylic-acid graft processing) for heightening selection of the quality of the material which raises the heat treatment temperature, the hardness, and the binding property for raising the crystallinity for example, at the time of separator production, or the sizing effectiveness between fiber, ].

[0025] And the bicomponent fiber of the sheath-core structure where the front face of polyolefine fiber simple substance; polyolefine fiber, such as a polyethylene fiber and a polypropylene fiber, is covered with polyolefine fiber of a different kind with it as an example of the plastic fiber which is the component of a separator; the bicomponent fiber which has block construction of the polyolefine fiber of different species mutually can be raised. Moreover, although PTFE fiber can also be used, the whole mechanical strength can also be raised by making an inorganic fiber like a glass fiber intermingled in that case.

[0026] Furthermore, as for a separator, it is desirable that the specific surface area when measuring by law one BET which used nitrogen is 0.5-5.0m<sup>2</sup>/g. If a separator with a specific surface area smaller than 0.5m<sup>2</sup>/g is used, solution retention may fall, if a separator with a larger specific surface area than 5.0m<sup>2</sup>/g is used conversely, since the tensile strength will become low, firmness falls and breakage of a separator etc. becomes easy to produce it at the time of winding at the time of manufacturing an electrode group.

Especially a desirable thing has specific surface area in the range which is 1.0-4.0m<sup>2</sup>/g as a separator.

[0027] Although it is desirable as a gestalt of a separator that it is the nonwoven fabric of the above-mentioned fiber, you may be the microporous sheet plastic which can dip the alkali electrolytic solution. In addition, when it is a nonwoven fabric, the above-mentioned fiber can be manufactured by dry process, the wet method, the span bond method, the melt blowing method, etc. Among these approaches, since the span bond method, the melt blowing method, and a split plot experiment can increase the specific surface area mentioned above, they are advantageous. In addition, in case a nonwoven fabric is produced, it is desirable to perform hot press processing by the temperature determined according to the quality of the material and the pressure.

[0028] Moreover, when the gestalt of a separator is a nonwoven fabric, as for the metsuke amount, it is desirable that it is 30 - 70 g/m<sup>2</sup>. Since the reinforcement as a separator is low, it may damage at the time of winding at the time of manufacturing the above-mentioned electrode group, and conversely, when larger than 70 g/m<sup>2</sup>, the nonwoven fabric with metsuke amount smaller than 30 g/m<sup>2</sup> becomes excessive [ the occupied volume of the separator concerned when manufacturing an electrode group ], and will cause the fall of electrode capacitance.

[0029] And when a separator is the nonwoven fabric of polyolefine system resin fiber, as for the nonwoven fabric, it is desirable that hydrophilization processing is performed, and it can raise graft copolymerization processing of vinyl polymer in which it has hydrophilic groups, such as fluorination processing, plasma treatment, corona discharge treatment, sulfonation processing, and a carboxyl group, for example, as such hydrophilization processing.

[0030] Graft copolymerization processing of vinyl polymer in which it has especially a hydrophilic group also in these hydrophilization processings is desirable. Here, the thing which has the functional group which reacts with direct acids, such as ester of an acrylic acid, a methacrylic acid, an acrylic acid, or a methacrylic acid, vinylpyridine, vinyl pyrrolidone, a styrene sulfonic acid, and styrene, or a base, and can form a salt as a vinyl monomer which has a hydrophilic group, for example, or the thing which has the functional group which hydrolyzes after graft polymerization is carried out, and can form a salt can be raised. Especially the acrylic acid is suitable as a vinyl monomer.

[0031] The graft copolymerization mentioned above is carried out by irradiating the energy beam represented by ionizing radiation like ultraviolet rays, an electron ray, and an X-ray, after immersing a nonwoven fabric in the solution of the vinyl monomer of a hydrophilic property and applying a vinyl monomer to a front face. And the graft copolymerization rate of the vinyl monomer at this time is the amount of ion exchanges calculated by titrimetric method which is described below, and it is desirable that it is 0.2 - 2.0 meq/g (milli-equivalent per gram).

[0032] Below, this titrimetric method is explained. First, Samples (for example, thing which carried out the graft copolymerization of the nonwoven fabric which consists of polyolefine fiber with the acrylic acid) 0.5-1g are taken to the 100ml jar made from polyethylene, and 100ml of 1N-HCl solutions is added, and when the sample has come floating, after sinking completely, it saves at a 60-degree C thermostat for 1 hour.

[0033] It continues, the above-mentioned sample is moved to the beaker containing 200ml of ion exchange water, and it agitates with a glass rod, and it washes until pH of a penetrant remover is set to 6-7, exchanging ion exchange water. It drains off water from a sample, extends on the bat made from stainless steel, and dries with a 100-degree C oven for 1 hour. The weight of the obtained sample is measured in the precision of 0.1mg after cooling, it moves to the 100ml jar made from polyethylene, and 0.01N-KOH solution 110g\*\*0.01g is added to it. On the other hand, 110g\*\*0.01g of 0.01N-KOH solutions is similarly extracted to the 100ml jar made from polyethylene as a blank sample. Then, these jars are put into a 60-degree C thermostat, are shaken lightly every 30 minutes, and are saved for 2 hours. After shaking each of these jars lightly, a sample is taken out, respectively, and it cools radiationally until it becomes a room temperature. About 100g of testing liquids after radiationnal cooling is measured in the precision of 0.01g to a 200ml conical beaker, a phenolphthalein is used as an indicator, and a neutralization titration is carried out with 0.1 N-HCl solutions. Moreover, a blank testing liquid is operated similarly and titrated. It computes by the formula showing the amount of potassium ion exchanges in the one following with such titration.

[0034]

[Equation 1]

$$I.E.C = \frac{T_2 \times S_1 / S_2 - T_1}{W_1} \times \frac{E_1}{S_1} \times 0.1 \times F$$

[0035] It is here and is the amount (meq/g) of I.E.C.:potassium ion exchanges.

T1: The amount of 0.1 N-HCl solution which titration of the sample solution took (ml)

T2: The amount of 0.1 N-HCl solution which titration of a blank solution took (ml)

S1: Weight of the extracted sample solution (g)

S2: Weight of the extracted blank solution (g)

W1: Weight of the sample after desiccation (g)

E1: Weight of the added 0.01N-KOH solution (g)  
F: Factor of 0.1 N-HCl solution -- when the amount of ion exchanges of said vinyl monomer computed by doing in this way is less than 0.2 meq/g, the graft copolymerization rate to a nonwoven fabric is small, and the solution retention of a separator may fall. On the other hand, when the amount of ion exchanges exceeds 2.0 meq/g, the operating potential at the time of carrying out high current discharge of the rechargeable battery may fall.

[0036]

[Example] <Example 1> To the production nickel hydroxide powder 100 weight section of (1) nickel pole (positive electrode), the cobalt oxide powder 6.1 weight section, the sodium polyacrylate 0.16 weight section, the hydroxymethyl cellulose 0.06 weight section, the carboxymethyl-cellulose 0.11 weight section, and the PTFE dispersion (specific gravity 1.5, 60 % of the weight of solid content contents) 0.67 weight section were mixed, the pure-water 30 weight section was added further, the whole was kneaded, and the paste was prepared. The foaming substrate of nickel was filled up with this paste, after drying, roll rolling was performed and the nickel pole (positive electrode) with a thickness of 0.6mm was produced.

[0037] (2) The production presentation of a hydrogen storing metal alloy electrode (negative electrode) carried out machine grinding of the hydrogen storing metal alloy of LmNi4.0Co0.04Mn0.3aluminum0.3 (Lm is the misch metal of La enrichment), and the powder under 200 meshes (Tyler screen) was obtained. Subsequently, to this powder 100 weight section, the sodium polyacrylate 0.3 weight section, the carboxymethyl-cellulose 0.05 weight section, the carbon black 1.0 weight section, and the PTFE dispersion (specific gravity 1.5, 60 % of the weight of solid content contents) 1.0 weight section were blended, the whole was kneaded with the water of 44 weight sections, and the paste was prepared.

[0038] This paste was dried after applying to nickel punched metal (45% of numerical apertures), roll rolling was carried out further, and the hydrogen storing metal alloy electrode (negative electrode) with a thickness of 0.3mm was produced.

(3) By the production span bond method of a separator, 10 micrometers of diameters of fiber and metsuke amount produced the base fabric from the polypropylene resin fiber of 50 g/m<sup>2</sup>. Hot press processing was performed to this base fabric the appropriate back, and the nonwoven fabric with a thickness of 0.15mm was

produced. It continues, this nonwoven fabric is taken out after being immersed in an acrylic-acid water solution, ultraviolet rays were irradiated and the graft copolymerization of the acrylic-acid monomer was carried out to it. The graft copolymerization rates at this time were 0.8 meq/g in the amount of ion exchanges mentioned above. After washing this nonwoven fabric and removing an unreacted acrylic acid, it dried and the separator of 20 micrometers of average apertures was obtained at the time of measurement by the bubble point method. The specific surface area measured by law one BET of this separator was 2.0m<sup>2</sup>/g. The terms and conditions at the time of this separator production were collectively shown in Table 1.

[0039] (4) The cylindrical shape nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery of the AAA size which has structure as held the electrolytic solution which consists of such an electrode group, 7 Ns KOH, and 1-N LiOH which infixed the separator obtained by the assembly above of a cell between the above-mentioned positive electrode and the negative electrode, wound the whole spirally, and produced the electrode group in a closed-end cylindrical cup and shown in drawing 1 were assembled.

(5) evaluation of a cell property -- after performing 150% of charge by 0.2C to nominal capacity to the cell obtained by doing in this way in 20 degrees C, the charge-and-discharge cycle which discharges until cell voltage is set to 1.0V by 1C was repeated 3 times. 150% of charge was performed by 0.2C the appropriate back, and it was kept for three days to the 60-degree C thermostat in the condition, it discharged until cell voltage was set to 1.0V by 1C after storage, and the remaining capacity at that time was measured.

[0040] the time of setting nominal capacity of a cell to C<sub>0</sub>, and setting the above-mentioned remaining capacity to C<sub>1</sub> -- degree type:100x -- the capacity survival rate (%) was computed by C<sub>1</sub>/C<sub>0</sub> (%), and the aging was shown in drawing 2. Subsequently, when this cell was disassembled, the separator was taken out and the average aperture was measured by the bubble point method like the above after rinsing desiccation, change was not seen but was 20 micrometers.

[0041] <Example 2> Cylindrical shape nickel and a hydrogen rechargeable battery were assembled like the above-mentioned example 1 except having used what is described below as a separator. By the span bond method, 10 micrometers of diameters of fiber and metsuke amount produced the base fabric from the polypropylene resin fiber of 50 g/m<sup>2</sup>. Hot press processing was performed to this base fabric the appropriate back, and the nonwoven fabric with a thickness of 0.200mm was produced. After continuing and immersing this nonwoven fabric in an acrylic-acid water solution, ultraviolet rays were irradiated and the graft copolymerization of the acrylic-acid monomer was carried out. A graft copolymerization rate and specific surface area were as having been shown in Table 1. After washing this nonwoven fabric and removing an unreacted acrylic acid, when it dried and measured by the bubble point method, the separator of 23 micrometers of average apertures was obtained.

[0042] It was 38 micrometers, when it took out from the cell and the average aperture was measured, after building this separator into the cell and performing charge and discharge on the same conditions as an example 1. To the obtained cell, characterization was performed like the above, the capacity survival rate was computed, and the aging was shown in drawing 2.

<Example 3> Cylindrical shape nickel and a hydrogen rechargeable battery were assembled like the above-mentioned example 1 except having used what is described below as a separator.

[0043] 20 micrometers of diameters of fiber and metsuke amount with which polypropylene resin fiber and polyethylene resin fiber adjoined mutually, and were arranged produced the base fabric of 58 g/m<sup>2</sup> with the wet method. Hot press processing was performed to this base fabric the appropriate back, and the nonwoven fabric with a thickness of 0.16mm was produced. After continuing and immersing this nonwoven fabric in an acrylic-acid water solution, ultraviolet rays were irradiated and the graft copolymerization of the acrylic-acid monomer was carried out. A graft copolymerization rate and specific surface area were as having been shown in Table 1. After washing this nonwoven fabric and removing an unreacted acrylic acid, when it dried and measured by the bubble point method, the separator of 25 micrometers of average apertures was obtained.

[0044] It was 30 micrometers, when it took out from the cell and the average aperture was measured, after building this separator into the cell and performing charge and discharge on the same conditions as an example 1. To the obtained cell, characterization was performed like the above, the capacity survival rate was computed, and the aging was shown in drawing 2.

<Examples 4 and 5> Except having changed the graft copolymerization rate at the time of carrying out graft copolymerization processing to the nonwoven fabric produced from the base fabric of polypropylene resin fiber, as shown in Table 1, the separator was produced like the above-mentioned example 1, characterization was performed on the same conditions, the capacity survival rate was computed, and the aging was shown in drawing 2.

[0045] <Example 1 of a comparison> Cylindrical shape nickel and a hydrogen rechargeable battery were assembled like the above-mentioned example 1 except having used what is described below as a separator. 20 micrometers of diameters of fiber and metsuke amount with which polypropylene resin fiber and polyethylene resin fiber adjoined mutually, and were arranged produced the base fabric of 58 g/m<sup>2</sup> with the wet method. The appropriate back, without performing hot press processing to this base fabric, thickness adjustment was performed and the nonwoven fabric with a thickness of 0.20mm was produced. After continuing and immersing this nonwoven fabric in an acrylic-acid water solution, ultraviolet rays were irradiated and the graft copolymerization of the acrylic-acid monomer was carried out. A graft copolymerization rate and specific surface area were as having been shown in Table 1. After washing this nonwoven fabric and removing an unreacted acrylic acid, when it dried and measured by the bubble point method, the separator of 30 micrometers of average apertures was obtained.

[0046] It was 52 micrometers, when it took out from the cell and the average aperture was measured, after building this separator into the cell and performing charge and discharge on the same conditions as an example 1. To the obtained cell, characterization was performed like the above, the capacity survival rate was computed, and the aging was shown in drawing 2.

[0047]

[Table 1]

		実施例 1	実施例 2	実施例 3	実施例 4	実施例 5	比較例 1
セバ レタ ー タ	繊維材料	ポリプロピレン	ポリプロピレン	ポリプロピレン/ ポリエチレン	ポリプロピレン	ポリプロピレン	ポリプロピレン/ ポリエチレン
	繊維径 (μm)	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
	目付量 (g/m <sup>2</sup> )	5.0	5.0	5.8	5.0	5.0	5.8
	イオン交換量 (meq/g) (グラフト共重合割合)	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.2	0.6	0.8
	比表面積 (m <sup>2</sup> /g)	2.0	2.0	1.2	2.0	2.0	1.2
	平均孔径 (μm)	充放電前 2.0	充放電後 2.3	2.5	2.0	2.0	3.0

[0048] The cell (examples 1-3) incorporating the separator whose average aperture after charge-and-discharge termination is 50 micrometers or less had the high capacity survival rate compared with the cell (example 1 of a comparison) incorporating the separator with which an average aperture exceeds 50 micrometers, and it was checked that the self-discharge property at the time of elevated-temperature storage is improving so that clearly also from the result shown in Table 1.

[0049]

[Effect of the Invention] By the above explanation, since the self-discharge property at the time of elevated-temperature storage is good, even if it carries out the mothball of the nickel and the hydrogen rechargeable battery of this invention under an elevated temperature, it shows a high capacity survival rate especially, so that clearly.

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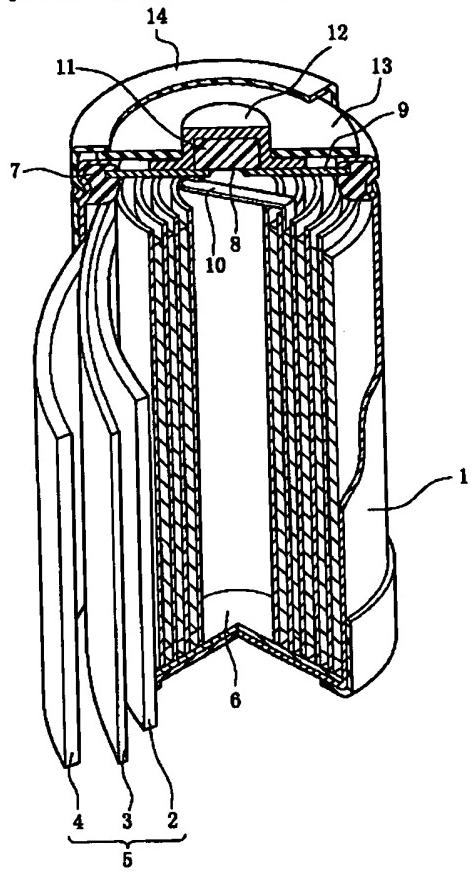
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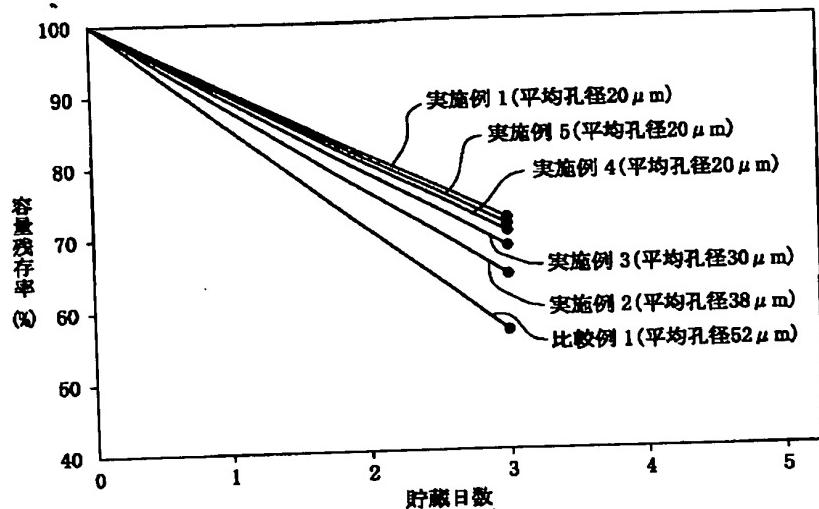
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**DRAWINGS**

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**[Drawing 1]****[Drawing 2]**



[Translation done.]

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